



County of San Diego

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH HAZARDOUS MATERIALS DIVISION

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<http://www.sdcdeh.org/deh/hmd/index.html>

MEDICAL WASTE DISPOSAL FOR VETERINARY PRACTICES

Medical waste is governed by the California Medical Waste Management Act (MWMA) and San Diego County Ordinance. Waste from a typical veterinary practice that is regulated as medical waste is, in almost all cases, limited to sharps waste and other waste that is contaminated due to direct contact with a zoonotic disease. Typical veterinary practices will also generate waste that may be classified as *hazardous* waste.

What waste from a veterinary practice must be managed as *medical waste*?

Regulated *medical waste* means waste that meets both of two conditions:

- The waste must be generated as a result of the diagnosis, treatment, or immunization of animals or research pertaining to the diagnosis, treatment, or immunization of animals
and
- It must be either *sharps* or *biohazardous* waste.

What is *sharps waste* ?

Sharps are devices with acute rigid corners, edges, or protuberances capable of cutting or piercing. *Sharps waste* includes, but is not limited to, hypodermic needles, blades, acupuncture needles, and root canal files. Broken glass items are considered sharps waste when they are contaminated with biohazardous waste.

What is *biohazardous waste*?

Biohazardous waste is waste that the attending veterinarian suspects is contaminated with infectious agents that are known to be contagious to humans. Animal parts, tissues, fluids, carcasses, vaccines or cultures could be biohazardous waste.

Biohazardous waste also includes:

- Articles such as IV bags, tubing, and tissues that are contaminated with small (non-pourable) amounts of toxic chemicals like formaldehyde or chemotherapeutic agents.
- Pharmaceutical waste that is toxic or ignitable.

How should a veterinarian practice dispose of regulated *medical waste* ?

There are several options for disposal of *medical waste*:

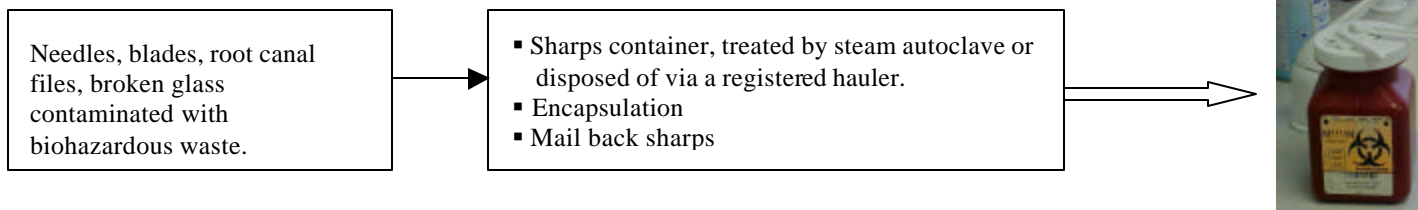
- Disposal through a registered *medical waste* hauler,
- Mail-in sharps disposal (sharps waste only),
- Use of an alternative treatment technology approved by the California Department of Health Services, such as encapsulation, which is used for *sharps waste*,
- Treatment onsite by a steam autoclave prior to disposal as medical solid waste.

“Environmental and public health through leadership, partnership, and science”

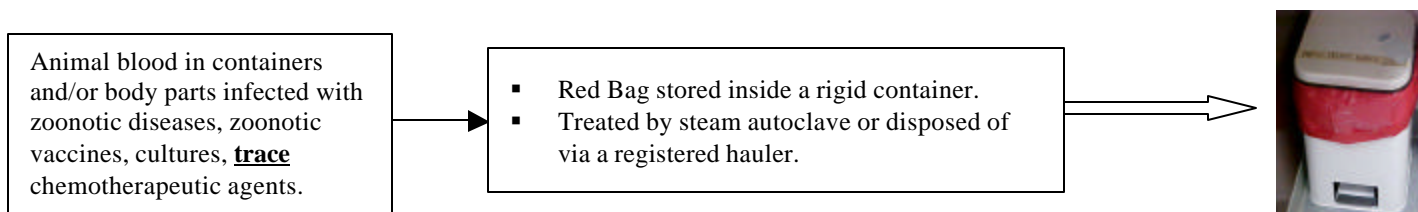
VETERINARY WASTE GUIDE

DISPOSAL OF REGULATED WASTE

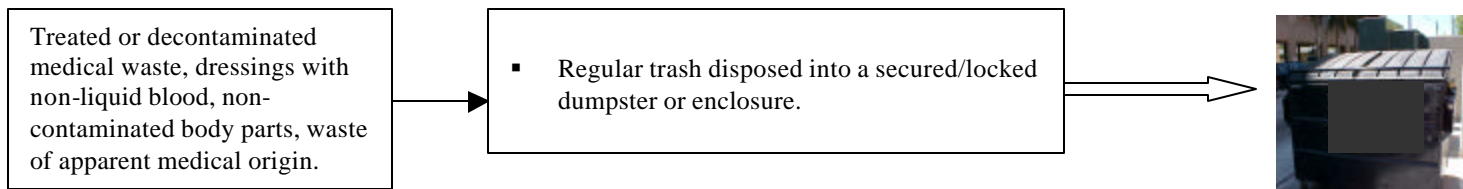
Regulated Medical (Sharps) Waste



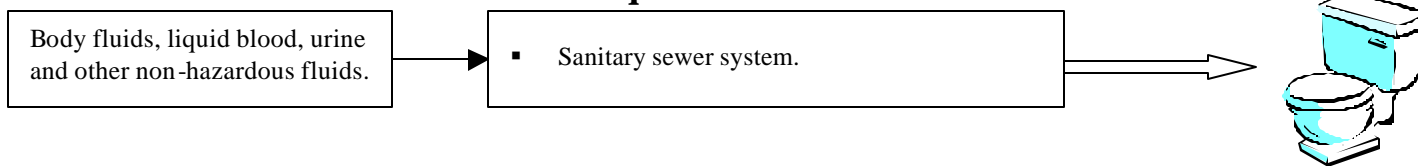
Regulated Medical (Biohazardous) Waste



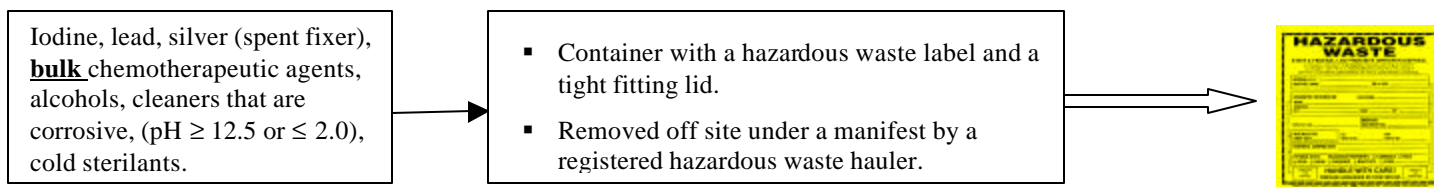
Medical Solid Waste



Liquid Medical Waste



Hazardous Waste



For additional information about medical and hazardous waste contact the Hazardous Materials Duty Desk at (619) 338-2231 or visit HMD's website at <http://www.sdcdeh.org/deh/hmd/index.html>

For ways to reduce waste through pollution prevention please contact HMD's Pollution Prevention Specialist at (619) 338-2324.